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Bangalore Mirror ON SUNDAY

TEMP Max 24 | Min 18 | Humidity 72% Partly Cloudy Sensex 71,483 | Nifty 21,456 | Gold 62,077 | Silver 74,415 | Dollar 83.04 | Euro 91.04 | GBP 105.37

Just 2% of fund allocated — Rs 2.5 cr of Rs 108.75 cr — to tackle air pollution utilised in 2022-23

AIR POCKETS

Experts point to lack of coordination among agencies

| Garima Prasher
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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

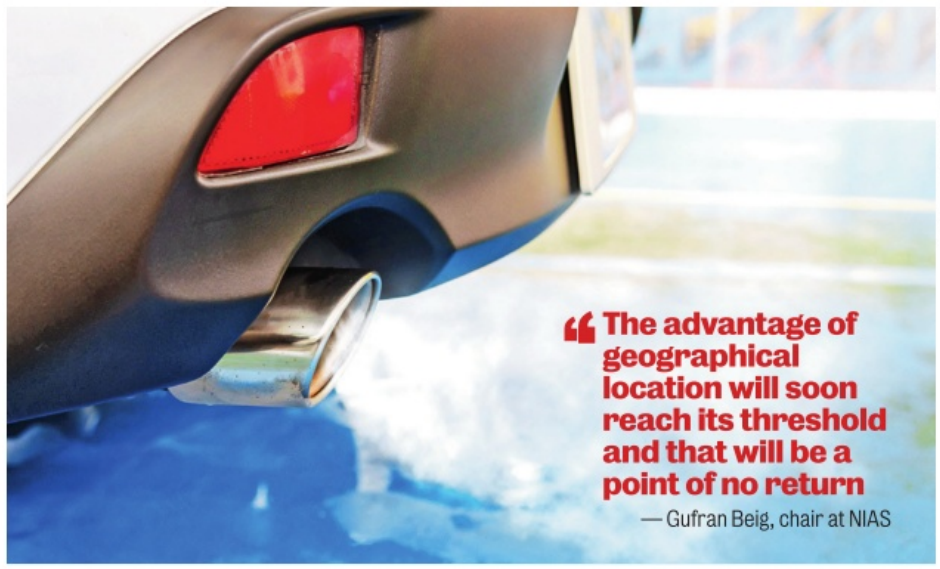
Bengaluru has utilised just a little over 2% of the fund released under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) in 2022-23, as per the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

While Rs 108.75 crore was allocated for air pollution control, only Rs 2.5 crore was utilised. The NCAP fund utilisation has been poor in the past as well. Bengaluru received Rs 147.35 crore in 2021-22 but could put only Rs 2.52 crore to use. In 2020-21, Rs 279 crore was released, and only Rs 0.01 crore was utilised.

For the ongoing year, a little over Rs 100 crore has been sanctioned under the programme.

Experts said this huge gap between Centre's allocation and utilisation indicates a complete lack of coordination among various departments responsible for implementing the programme.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12 »



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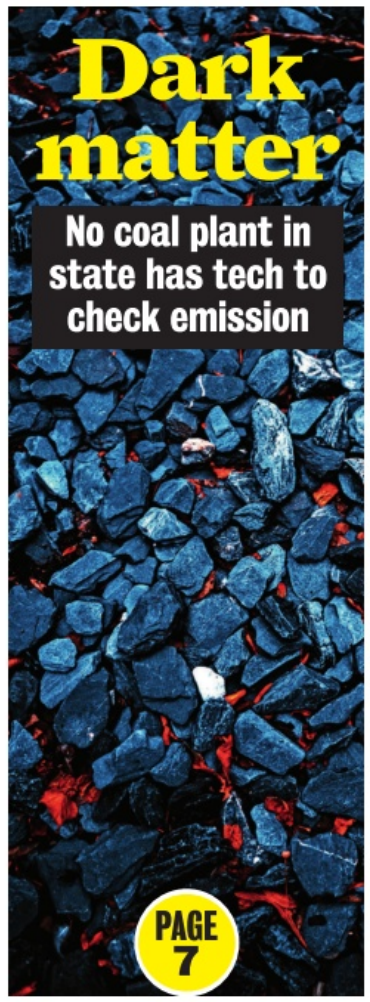
> "The advantage of geographical location will soon reach its threshold and that will be a point of no return
> — Gufran Beig, chair at NIAS



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3 THINGS TO DO

01 Artistic claim

Get ready to attend the 3rd edition of the India Art Festival (IAF), which aims to showcase an unprecedented array of artistic talents. You can find some of the very interesting contemporary art presented by over 25 art galleries and featuring contributions from 400 artists hailing from various cities across the nation. You can also explore artistic expressions and the latest art trends. **Where: King's Court, Palace Grund, Gate no. 5, Bellary Road, near Mekhri Circle; When: Today; 11 am to 8 pm**

02 Silk route

Visit the National Silk Expo, an exclusive exhibition and sale that features more than 1,50,000 varieties of sarees and dress materials, displaying the weaving traditions of India. You will find jute silks in vibrant colours, polished and raw tussars, maslin silk, tangail, linen sarees, and more. You can also get Banarasi silk, Rajasthani dabu print, Bihar tussar silk, and Gujarat patola. **Where: Shilpa Kala Mantapa, 9th Cross, JP Nagar, 3rd Phase Bannerghatta Main Road**
When: until December 25; 11 am to 9 pm

03 Cartoon trips

IIC is back with its new showcase of cartoons, as it is organising an exhibition by award-winning Brazilian cartoonist Silvano Mello this month. Mello's works have been published in various international publications. He has been dedicated to graphic humour since 2007.
Where: Indian Cartoon Gallery
When: until December 23

Trio of tests creates heavy confusion here

State government opts to administer 'three' exams to support students failing SSLC exams; students skipping main exam will not be permitted to take 2nd and 3rd exam

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To assist students failing the SSLC exams, the state government has decided to conduct three SSLC exams in the current academic year. However, there are many doubts among stakeholders.

The education department has announced a tentative timetable for the introduction of a three-exam format. For SSLC (10th standard), the main exams are scheduled to take place between March 25 and April 6, with results to be announced in the first or second week of May. The second exam may be held between June 12 and 19, with results likely on June 29, and the third exam may be held between July 29 and August 5, with results likely on August 19.

Many parents say that if someone passes the third exam, how will they get admission to other courses? By then, all PU and diploma courses would have already begun. Moreover, for the first SSLC exam, the fee is Rs 644 for six subjects. However, for the second and third exams, a student has to pay Rs 407 for each subject, Rs 507 for two subjects, and Rs 682 for three or more subjects. This fee structure is higher than the PU fee.

Jagannath Nadgir, an education consultant, said, "If the government wants to conduct three exams, then it is better to conduct the first exam in February itself, and if that is done, then all three exams can be concluded by May itself. The exam wing should understand that teachers should not be burdened with three exams, as teachers are primarily meant to teach and not to do multiple evaluations."

G Kotresh, an education department official, clarified, "Those students who skip the SSLC main exam will not be permitted to take the second and third exam."

However, defending the decision, an education department official said, "The decision to introduce three exams in a year has both positive and negative implications. While it could benefit some students, particularly

> **"If the government wants to conduct three exams, then it is better to conduct the first exam in February itself**
> –Jagannath Nadgir

by reducing the pressure associated with the previous system that included a supplementary exam within a month, it may also create additional stress for high-achieving students. Those who have already scored well might face heightened expectations to perform even better, potentially forcing students with lower marks to take extra exams in an attempt to improve their performance."

For SSLC, the main exams are scheduled to take place between March 25 and April 6, with results to be announced in May

He added that it's worth noting that prior consultation with relevant stakeholders, including educators and school administrators, would have provided valuable insights into the potential consequences and challenges of this change. Effective implementation is crucial to prevent overburdening schools and teachers with additional exam-related responsibilities.

Meanwhile, Minister for Primary and Secondary Education Madhu Bangarappa justified the three-exam format by stating that even those who successfully passed the SSLC main exams would have the opportunity to take the second and third exams as "improvement" exams.

However, it is essential for both private and freshers to maintain a 75% attendance to qualify for SSLC exams. The exam scores will be recorded in the National Academic Depository (NAD).

Bangarappa highlighted that the three-exam structure provides failed students with two additional chances to progress to the next academic year within the same academic year.

Medical service breaks free from rural service rule

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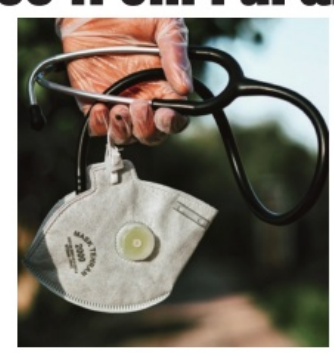
During the recent Karnataka Assembly legislative session, Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao stated that the state government has decided to exempt the one year of rural service for the medical students who have completed their undergraduate course. It was decided to amend the Karnataka Compulsory Service by Candidates Completed Medical Courses Act, which points out the rule that MBBS and medical PG students should compulsorily serve for a year in rural Karnataka in government institutions.

The decision comes in as there have been a number of MBBS candidates passing out each year, but the vacancies in government institutions have been smaller and are not meeting the requirements to place these students. Extra postings were made and given to these students; however, now that the requirements are high and the vacancies are smaller, the state government has decided to amend this rule.

The students, however, pointed out that the move was beneficial to them. "The act came into effect in 2012 for the MBBS and medical PG students to serve a one-year compulsory rural bond for those who were under the government quota. Although there were benefits for us where we could get hands-on practical experience in rural district hospitals after doing our MBBS and with a stipend of Rs 62,666, there was also the disadvantage of students having to lose their one year to get their PG seat," said Dr Shashikant Kamble.



He also pointed out that some of the students find it difficult to relocate from one district to another and to stay there for one whole year. Now that the service is not compulsory, it can serve as an added benefit to them.

However, the government has also decided to retain some of the students for rural service wherever there is a shortage of medical staff.

Sanjay Raj, State Secretary, University Incharge, RGUHS, NSUI Karnataka, said, "We welcome the decision of the GOK in regard to the bill to amend the Karnataka compulsory rural service candidates who completed medical courses Act, 2012. It is also a student-friendly decision."

Web tightens, cyber criminal slips away

Crime surges by 139.52%, but detection plummets to 5.99%

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While cybercrime cases are on the rise in the state, the detection rate is declining. According to the latest statistics revealed by the Karnataka government in the Assembly, the cybercrime landscape in Karnataka has seen a significant increase over the years.

Between 2021 and 2022, there was a notable surge of approximately 54.17 per cent in reported cybercrimes, with the number escalating from 8,143 to 12,551.

The upward trajectory continued into 2023 (these numbers are only till November 25, 2023, and when the entire year is taken into account, the numbers may rise further), where reported cybercrimes reached 19,478, representing a substantial 139.52 per cent increase from the 2021 figures.

However, when examining the effectiveness of cybercrime detection and law enforcement, the detection rate, calculated as the percentage of cybercriminals arrested compared to those identified, sheds light on the state's response. In 2021, the detection rate stood at 15.17 per cent, indicating that law enforcement successfully apprehended 544 of the 3,586 identified cybercriminals. In the subsequent year, 2022, the detection rate was 15.77 per cent, with 545 arrests out of 3,454 identified cybercriminals.

However, the detection rate exhibited a decline in 2023, plummeting to 5.99 per cent, as only 308 arrests were made out of the 5,139 identified cybercriminals.

An official said, "These statistics underscored the escalating challenges posed by cybercrimes in Karnataka, necessitating a comprehensive and adaptive approach to address the evolving nature of cyber threats.

Moreover, the varying detection rates raise concerns about the efficacy of law enforcement strategies in keeping pace with the growing sophistication of cybercriminal activities."

> **"The varying detection rates raise concerns about the efficacy of law enforcement strategies in keeping pace with the growing sophistication of cybercriminal activities**
>
> — CYBERCRIME CELL OFFICIAL

Replying to a query in the Assembly recently, Home Minister G Parameshwara said, "To curb cybercrime, cyber economic and narcotic crime police stations (CEN) exist. Currently, there are 43 CEN stations in Karnataka.

To address cybercrimes, we have established a Centre for Cybercrime Investigation Training and Research (CCITR) unit in the CID office, where training is imparted. A lot of awareness programs were also undertaken."

Meanwhile, in another reply in the Lok Sabha, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said, "Karnataka has just one cyber cell and eight cyber crime police stations as against 49 cyber cells and 46 cyber crime police stations in Maharashtra."

He mentioned that the Citizen Financial Cyber Frauds Reporting and Management System has been developed as a part of the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal. This module provides an integrated platform where all stakeholders, including Law Enforcement Agencies of States/UTs, all major banks, and financial intermediaries, payment wallets, crypto exchanges, and e-commerce companies, work in tandem to ensure that quick, decisive, and system-based effective action is taken to prevent the flow of money from the victim's account to the cyber fraudster's account. The money thus seized is then restored to the victim following the due legal process.

The platform enables the identification of the various financial channels being misused by the fraudsters for routing the fraud proceeds. A toll-free Helpline number '1930' has been operationalised to get assistance in lodging online cyber incidents.

So far, over Rs 1000 Crore has been saved in 4 lakh incidents.

Honey trap gang extorts man

A woman and four of her associates have been charged with honey-trapping a man. A 48-year-old man filed a complaint with the Rajajinagar Police Station, stating that the suspects snatched Rs 4,000 from him and demanded Rs 6 lakh in exchange for not disclosing his contact with Sabha, the primary suspect in the case.

According to the FIR, the victim was introduced to Sabha by Khaleem Mohammed, who claimed she was a widow. Sabha allegedly called the victim to meet her at a hotel in Rajarajeshwari Nagar after a few days. On December 14, Khaleem and two other men approached the victim while he was in the hotel visiting the woman and took money from him.

They allegedly threatened the victim with murder and warned him not to disclose his relationship with Sabha.

Man arrested for assaulting policemen

The Bengaluru Police arrested a man on assault charges after he allegedly attempted to strike a policeman while being questioned about disturbing public peace. Jagadish, a Girinagar resident, was arrested after a scuffle with his neighbour was discovered around 4 am on Thursday. After two policemen were assaulted trying to stop the fight, an FIR was registered.

Based on the FIR, PSI Devaraj was on night duty when a woman called the police at 3:50 am on Thursday to report that a man was shouting at his neighbour and fighting with them. When Devaraj and the constable arrived, Jagadish accused them of collecting bribes and insulted them with foul language.

When the police attempted to end the fight, Jagadish attempted to assault them and impede them from doing their jobs. The man has been charged with assault and criminal intimidation.

Bengaluru battles escalating drug menace

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In recent years, Bengaluru has experienced a concerning surge in cases under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, with a total of 4,027 reported in 2022. The city reported the second-highest number of cases under the NDPS Act in the country, following Mumbai. Alarmingly, 3,457 of these cases involve individuals facing charges for drug consumption and personal use, while 570 incidents relate to drug trafficking. The city has a crime rate of 47.4 for NDPS cases and a 40.7 crime rate for drug consumption. According to the latest data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), Bengaluru has surpassed several other cities, including Hyderabad (307), Kochi (2,751), Jaipur (451), and Delhi (1,161), in terms of drug trafficking and consumption.

Even the statistics for 2023 are concerning. According to data from the Karnataka State Police, Bengaluru recorded 3,354 cases under the NDPS Act as of October 2023. The data reveals that while other districts in Karnataka typically record 20 to 30 cases a month, Bengaluru is consistently reporting more than 300 drug-related cases each month.

Dr Sudarshan, a rehabilitation psychologist, mentioned that there are multiple factors contributing to the growing allure of drugs among youngsters in metropolitan areas. Firstly, the pervasive influence of social media fosters a desire to appear 'cool' in peer circles, shaping drug consumption as a misguided means of social validation.

"Students in the age group of 12 to 18 tend to have high sensation-seeking behaviour and they are experimental. Additionally, teenagers' inherent inclination for experimentation, coupled with less rational decision-making, makes them attracted to substance abuse," he said.

He adds that the anonymity afforded by big city life, compared to the close-knit communities of small towns, facilitates greater drug availability and usage. "In tier two cities people often see people who they have known for a while or are a part of their community whereas in the metro one might meet people from across the globe and procuring drugs in anonymity becomes easy," he said.

He also added that research has shown that Gen Z tends to perceive more stress than the previous generation, leading them to sometimes believe that drugs can be used for relieving stress. He suggested starting drug education in earlier grades as children are less experimental.

Lake emerges as festive left-over gets taken out

Locals come together to restore Kasavanahalli Lake's beauty amid post-festival debris

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A group of dedicated volunteers took matters into their own hands to address the aftermath of Durga Puja festivities at Kasavanahalli Lake Kalyani. The serene premises, once graced by colourful Durga idols during the festival, were marred by neglect and waste, prompting concerned citizens to step forward. Witnessing the unfortunate state of the lake, a group of volunteers initiated a plogging activity in collaboration with the Indian Ploggers Army, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), and U&I as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) efforts. The cleanup commenced at 9:10 am and continued until 10:45 am, rallying around 35-40 enthusiastic volunteers clearing around 125 kg of trash in the lake premises.

The residents had been observing the dire state of Kalyani and the PoP idols just dumped there. While the PoP idols have been completely banned, their immersion continues, and the idols have been lying at the Kalyani without cleaning. The debris included remnants of Durga Puja idols, discarded clothing, footwear, plastic, and various other items—most notably, artefacts from post-Dusshera idol immersion.

Reflecting on the cleanup initiative, one of the volunteers stated, "It was disheartening to see the beauty of the lake overshadowed by the aftermath of celebrations. We believe in taking responsibility for our environment, and this cleanup was just the beginning."

Volunteers, partnering with Indian Ploggers Army, BBMP, and U&I for CSR, conducted a impactful cleanup, removing 125 kg of trash from the lake

Raj from Ploggers Army said, " We found around 3-4 idols that were lying unattended. It mounted around 30-60 kg. Around the lakes, there was a lot of cloth waste and biscuit wrappers, chocolate wrappers, and bottles that were dumped. The residents also joined us and were happy to be part of the clean-up drive. They have even highlighted a similar issue at Kaikondrahalli Lake; next, we will look at cleaning up that lake. Many of us feel that such immersions should happen at bigger kalyanis or water bodies as the water levels are much lower than the idols, and eventually, all PoP idols will not sink and then land as trash. Ideally, strict vigilance before immersion should happen, and strong enforcement should be done on the ban of PoP idols."

"They have even highlighted a similar issue at Kaikondrahalli Lake; next, we will look at cleaning up that lake

– Raj, Indian Ploggers Army

He further pointed out that through such initiatives, they aim to raise awareness and advocate for responsible celebrations to ensure a cleaner and healthier environment for all. "Witnessing the lake in such a neglected state was disheartening, but joining hands with fellow residents and volunteers to restore its beauty reflects the true spirit of our community. There needs to be constant maintenance at the lake. Our actions today can shape a better environment for generations to come," said a resident.

Karnataka's unchecked sewage threatens environment

State's sewage crisis: 43 per cent untreated, posing a threat to public health

Between July 2022 and May 2023, Karnataka generated 3,356.5 million litres per day (MLD) of sewage and installed an operational treatment capacity of 1929.1 MLD. According to information provided by the state to the National Green Tribunal (NGT), nearly 43 per cent of the sewage generated every day (1,427.4 MLD) is not being treated. Experts say that rapid urbanisation, an increase in the number of towns/cities, and rapid population growth have increased sewage generation. The gap in treatment is leading to an increase in pollution of wetlands, including lakes and rivers.

Untreated sewage can infiltrate the ground, contaminating the local groundwater

"Releasing 1,913 MLD untreated wastewater into the environment is a dangerous proposition. Sewage water consists of toxic materials and chemicals that can harm the environment and human health. Untreated sewage may seep underground and contaminate the groundwater table of the area as well. This, in turn, would affect our food. It is high time Karnataka makes treating 100 per cent wastewater mandatory and at least brings it to Class-D before releasing it into the environment," said Raghavendra B Pachhapur, a city-based lake activist.

Experts say that public health and sanitation are state matters, and it is the responsibility of the state or urban local body to plan, design, execute, and operate sanitation projects in urban areas. However, the centre supplements efforts in providing infrastructure for basic services such as sewerage infrastructure, including Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs), in urban areas through its various flagship missions.

"All wastewater has to be treated according to the Central Public Health and Environmental Engineering Organisation (CPHEEO) standards and Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) guidelines. Karnataka has the bandwidth to treat 100 per cent of wastewater generated, and this is the need of the hour. However, the focus should be on not only enhancing the treatment capacity of wastewater but also attaining tertiary treatment, which is done scientifically. It is only when sewage treatment is at the tertiary level that our water bodies and wetlands can stay in good health," said V Ramprasad, founder, Friends of Lakes. — BMB

The gap in treatment is leading to an increase in pollution of wetlands.

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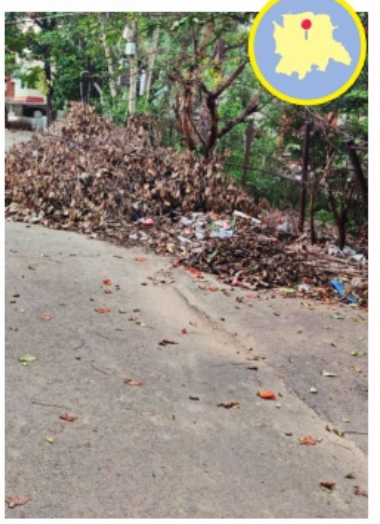
Uncleared leaves

Yelahanka



Dry leaves in Yelahanka New Town have not been cleared for several days, even after filing a complaint.

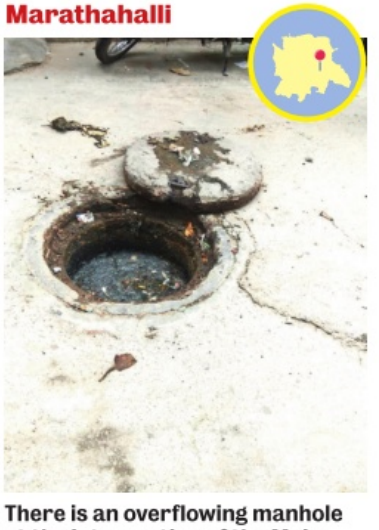
Dumped debris

Malleswaram

Debris has been dumped on 8th Main at Chitrapur Circle in Malleswaram.

Manhole spill

Marathahalli



There is an overflowing manhole at the intersection of the Main Road and 2nd Cross Road near Deepa Nursing Home in Marathahalli.

Calling all nature-lovers, future conservationists

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In a move towards wildlife conservation, the Karnataka Ecotourism Development Board (KEDB) has come forward with its Certified Volunteer Training Programme (VTP). Nature enthusiasts and aspiring conservationists have a golden opportunity to participate in the first programme of 2024, set to take place at the Bandipur Tiger Reserve from January 5 to 9.

The programme was launched in 2013, to equip volunteers with the skills needed to support the Karnataka Forest Department in diverse conservation activities. These include tiger estimation, bird surveys, elephant estimation, nature awareness in schools, and other pivotal programmes. With a successful track record of training over 500 volunteers, the programme temporarily ceased after 2015 but is now making a comeback due to popular demand.

This year, the programmes have been conducted at various wildlife hubs, including the Kulgi Nature Camp in Dandeli and the Bandipur Tiger Reserve, and soon the first programme for the next year will begin.

Rahul Aradhya, Chief Trainer and Naturalist at KEDB, said, "The 5-day immersive training programme aims to sensitise participants to biodiversity and conservation efforts. Attendees can expect a diverse curriculum, featuring talks, discussions, and practical sessions on a wide range of subjects, from communication skills to Indian wildlife laws. The programme includes engaging topics such as mammal behaviour, wilderness first aid, bird ecology, storytelling, conservation issues, and more."

Volunteers get trained in a programme by KEDB

The participants will have the opportunity to explore the wilderness through walks, safaris, and field visits.

Aradhya further pointed out that, so far, they have received 2,000 applications for the programme. There are around 30 slots available for every training programme, and 18 have already been booked.

"The programme is like a sensitisation and awareness workshop. There will be walks and safaris, and there will be a lot of information given to them about the forest. Once they complete the training, their contact details and email addresses will be taken, which will be sent to the KFD officials of all the districts. As and when required, the officials can reach out to them about volunteering. They will also be given a certification towards the end of training," explained Aradhya.

One can expect a lot from the programme that will include plant and tree life, mammal behaviour, communication skills, bird ecology, reptiles and amphibians, the Indian Wildlife Act, butterflies and moths, conservation issues, techniques, and various other topics, along with multiple walks, safaris, and field visits.

The Bandipur Tiger Reserve, with its rich biodiversity, provides an ideal backdrop for this transformative training programme, promising an enriching experience for all those involved.

It's somewhat quiet, but not quite enough

Despite continual decrease in noise levels on Mysore Road and around NIMHANS, decibel levels persist above permissible limits, reveals data

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Up until a few months ago, Bengaluru's silent zones were the noisiest spots in the city. The noise pollution monitoring station installed by the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) at RVCE on Mysore Road and NIMHANS recorded higher decibel values than stations in industrial and commercial areas. However, the silent zones have shaken off this dubious distinction now.

According to official data, there has been a consistent decline in the noise levels in these areas over the last couple of months. While the decibel (dB) levels are still above permissible limits, Bengaluru's silent zones are much quieter.

While NIMHANS recorded a monthly average noise level of 55 dB during the day and 55.7 dB at night, on Mysore Road, it was 60.4 dB during the day and 56.9 dB at night.

According to Central Pollution Control Board specifications, the permissible sound level (dB) in a silent zone during the day is 50 dB and during the night is 40 dB. In the case of residential areas, the permissible limits are 55 dB during the day and 45 dB at night. The permissible noise level for industrial areas is 74 dB during the day and 70 dB at night.

"Higher noise levels recorded by the station on Mysore Road were mostly due to construction and other activities by RVCE. Based on noise pollution data from early this year, we requested the college authorities stop nighttime construction activities and student programmes. The metro station near the college was also contributing to the pollution level, as vehicles passing under the station would honk and the sound would reverberate. In this regard too, we had instructed RVCE to coordinate with traffic police and conduct awareness programmes for the motorists in the area," said a KSPCB official.

Monitoring station recordings show city's silent zones are much quieter over the last couple of months

> **"Higher noise levels at the station on Mysore Road were mostly due to activities by RVCE. We requested college authorities stop nighttime construction**
>
> –KSPCB official

According to RVCE, the instructions issued by KSPCB were implemented by the institute, and that might be the reason behind the drop in noise pollution levels.

"Some construction activities taking place on the campus, which involved excavation work, were leading to higher noise pollution. We have also issued instructions to students not to conduct any programmes at night. Moreover, the noise level had gone up after metro construction due to honking under the bridge. However, we requested that BMRCL put up no honking boards under the station. Our students also carried out a series of awareness programmes for motorists using the stretch. The drop in noise levels may be an outcome of all these activities combined," said a representative of RVCE.

The KSPCB station at NIMHANS has also recorded a slight drop in noise levels over the last few months. Locals attribute it to improved road conditions in the area.

"The traffic situation appears to have improved in the area. Roads have improved, leading to a free flow of traffic and thus lower noise levels. Moreover, construction activities in the area have also gone down," said a resident of Rajiv Gandhi Nagar.

Callousness kills accident victim

While a car ran over a three-year-old and the accused fled the scene, two young men who were crossing the road walked away without looking at the seriously injured child, on December 10 in Bellandur. The child died as she did not receive treatment on time.

The child was playing outside the apartment complex her father works as a security guard in the morning when the car that came out of the basement knocked her down. The car driver left without noticing this.

The child tried to get up and fell again. At the time, two young men passed by without noticing the moaning child. Her father only came later and took her to a hospital. The footage was captured on CCTV of a nearby apartment. She was taken to a private hospital first where as her father could not afford the treatment, he took her to a government hospital. According to police sources, the doctor there told him to take him to another hospital and when he arrived there, she was declared dead. **BMB**

Suburban rail gets German aid

The Bengaluru Suburban Railway Project got a major boost on Saturday when a loan agreement was signed with KfW Development Bank, Germany, by Rail Infrastructure Development Company (Karnataka) Limited (K-RIDE) in New Delhi on December 15.

As per the agreement, KfW Development Bank will provide Euro 500 million (Rs 4,552 crore) and a grant of Euro 4.5 million (Rs 41 crore) for the BSRP. The loan agreement is meant for Corridor-1 from Bengaluru City Railway Station to Devanahalli and Corridor-3 from Kengeri to Whitefield. K-RIDE said in a statement that the agreement was signed in the presence of senior officials from the Department of Economic Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, the Government of India, the Government of Karnataka, and KfW officials. **–BMB**

BMTC plans expansion of EV charging infrastructure

City all set for an eco-revolution as BMTC plans to electrify bus stands for a greener Bengaluru

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Select bus stands in the city will soon be turned into EV charging points for buses as the Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) plans to increase the charging units as it wants to enhance its EV fleet.

With the BMTC expanding its fleet of electric buses, the demand for charging stations at depots is on the rise. Consequently, BMTC has initiated plans to establish charging stations at five bus stands. Currently, efforts are in place to install charging stations at Shivajinagar (600 KVA HT), Bannerghatta (600 KVA HT), BTM Layout (1,100 KVA HT), Kalasipalya (1,100 KVA HT), and Mallasandra (1,400 KVA HT) bus stands. In addition, BMTC is in discussions with Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited (BESCOM) and Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation (KPTCL) to determine the cost of installing a charging station at the city's largest bus stand at Subhashnagar (Majestic, 1,900 KVA HT). At present, BMTC has a fleet strength of 6,222 including 391 electric buses and 5,831 diesel buses.

Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy said that charging station installations are already complete at Depot 3 (Shantinagar, equipped with a 5,200 kilovolt-amperes (kVA) high tension (HT) electric supply) and Depot 8 (Hebbal, with a 1,400 KVA HT). He further added that ongoing works are in progress at Depot 29 (KR Puram, with a 4,100 KVA HT electric connection) and Depot 10 (Hennur, boasting a 5,000 KVA electricity supply). The Minister also said that tenders are currently under evaluation for charging stations at Depot 27 (Jigani, with a 4,100 KVA HT electricity supply), Depot 4 (Vijayanagar, with a 4,900 KVA HT), Depot 22 (Peenya, with a 4,500 KVA HT), and Depot 35 (Kannahalli, with a 3,500 KVA HT), and administrative approval is pending for the estimated cost of charging station installation at Depot 16 (Deepanjali Nagar, with a 3,700 KVA HT electricity supply.

BMTC currently operates a fleet of 6,222 buses, comprising 391 electric buses and 5,831 diesel buses

BMTC plans 320 AC electric buses, following the success of 390 non-AC electric buses and State approval to replace diesel buses

Officials said that the introduction of 921 Tata Electric buses by BMTC under the FAME-II scheme prompts the need for charging stations, with plans for phased induction by March 2024. These 12.0-metre low-floor electric buses boast a comfortable seating capacity for 35 passengers and convenient entry and exit. Operating on a Gross Cost Contract (GCC) Model at Rs. 41.01 per km, these buses received a subsidy from the Ministry of Heavy Industries, enabling BMTC to deploy them across ten identified depots. The opportunity charging process involves a 45-minute session for each bus.

In a strategic move, BMTC also eyes the introduction of 320 AC electric buses to complement the existing fleet. The popularity of non-AC electric buses in the city has paved the way for this transition, with 390 operational non-AC electric buses already making an impact. The State cabinet's recent approval aligns with BMTC's plan to gradually replace diesel buses with eco-friendly alternatives.

Presently, 800 AC Volvo buses operate under the Vajra and Vayu Vajra brands, catering to various routes, including Whitefield, Electronic City, and Outer Ring Road.

K'taka seeks feedback on Gig Workers' Bill

Bangalore Mirror Bureau
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The State Government is seeking suggestions and inputs regarding the proposed Gig and Platform Workers' Bill. A recent consultative meeting, facilitated by the Bangalore Chamber of Industry and Commerce (BCIC), included Additional Labour Commissioner (Industrial Relations) Manjunath Gangadhara discussing the bill, soon to be tabled in the assembly.

Representatives from Ola, Uber, Flipkart, Zomato, Dunzo, FreshOn, Zepto, OMI Foundation, Wadhwani Institute of Technology, and Karnataka State Unorganised Workers Social Security Board (UWSSB),

In September, the Karnataka government notified a Rs 4 lakh insurance cover for gig workers

among other aggregator applications, have raised various concerns and provided suggestions on persistent issues. These include a clear definition of a gig worker, social security for them, the utility of the welfare fund, incentives, financial levy mechanisms, and a fair distinction between the ride-sharing space and the third-sided marketplace. Furthermore, the government aims to collect feedback and suggestions from all stakeholders involved in the aggregator community to be incorporated into the draft bill.

In September, the Karnataka government notified a Rs 4 lakh insurance cover for gig workers, which was announced in the state budget.

BM Health

Consumer Connect Initiative

Karnataka's health push: Tackling childhood pneumonia

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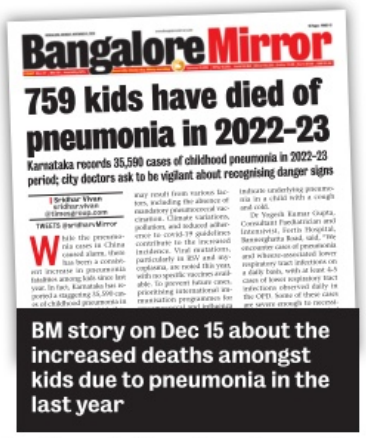
With an alarming rise in pneumonia-related deaths among children, the health department has initiated an awareness program. Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao articulated the objective, stating that the aim is to reduce childhood pneumonia mortality in India to less than three per thousand live births by 2025.

The Social Awareness and Action to Neutralise Pneumonia Successfully (SAANS) campaign has been launched to strengthen the health system and raise community awareness regarding childhood pneumonia. Dr Basavaraj B Dhabadi, Deputy Director of Child Health, Health & Family Welfare Directorate Services, stressed that SAANS aims to increase awareness about pneumonia, a significant cause of childhood mortality.

Outlining the key objectives, Rao said, "The main goal of the SAANS campaign is to include the adoption and adherence to National Childhood Pneumonia Management guidelines, creating awareness and mobilising the community for pneumonia protection, prevention, and treatment. The initiative also focuses on early identification and management of children under five years with suspected pneumonia, as well as strengthening facility-level management for severe pneumonia cases."

He also said that under the SAANS campaign, various activities are being implemented, such as house-to-house visits by ASHA workers to screen for pneumonia signs among children under five years, counselling mothers on breastfeeding importance, pneumonia danger signs, and timely vaccination.


Bangalore Mirror

759 kids have died of pneumonia in 2022-23

Karnataka records 35,590 cases of childhood pneumonia in 2022-23 period; city doctors ask to be vigilant about recognising danger signs

BM story on Dec 15 about the increased deaths amongst kids due to pneumonia in the last year

Rao further explained, "Additionally, health facilities are being strengthened for pneumonia management, including oxygen supply, triage areas, and adherence to treatment guidelines. Capacity building for healthcare professionals is also part of the initiative."

Within the Universal Immunisation Program, three doses of the Pneumococcal Vaccine are administered at six weeks and 14 weeks, with a booster dose at nine months. The health ministry emphasises the critical role of breastfeeding in child survival, with exclusive breastfeeding having the potential to prevent 13 per cent of under-five deaths globally each year. The importance of early initiation of breastfeeding is highlighted, as it can reduce 22 per cent of all newborn deaths, the minister said.

Meanwhile, officials said that despite the benefits of human milk, challenges remain in fully utilising it to its potential. Donor Human Milk (DHM) is suggested as an alternative, and the establishment of human milk banks is recommended by the World Health Organisation. Rao announced steps taken by Karnataka to establish Comprehensive Lactation Management Centres in nine districts, supporting them with human resources and essential equipment. These centres play a crucial role in promoting breastfeeding, providing nutrition to premature and sick infants, and contributing to improved child health outcomes and reduced neonatal mortality rates.

THE SUNDAY READ

Heart of darkness

Not even single coal-based power plant in state has set up tech needed to meet emission standards

Technologies recommended by Environment Ministry help keep sulfur dioxide emissions in check at coal-based power plants

| Garima Prasher
garima.prasher@timesgroup.com

TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

According to a recent report by the Center for Research for Energy and Clean Air (CREA), a research organisation, not even a single coal-based power plant in Karnataka has installed the required technology to meet prescribed emission standards. The technology was recommended by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) through a notification eight years ago to keep sulphur dioxide (SO2) emissions in check.

These technologies include Flue Gas Desulfurisation (FGD) and Circulating Fluidised Bed Combustion (CFBC). While FGD is used to remove sulphur compounds from emissions of coal-based power plants, CFBC brings down the level of pollutants in exhaust emissions.

In the meantime, 15 power plants have entered the bid-awarded stage for FGD installation since December 2022 and three have opened the bids.

Realising the contribution of SO2 emissions from coal-based power generation to the overall pollution through primary and secondary particulate formation routes, the MoEF&CC introduced emission norms for controlling SO2, nitrogen oxides (NOx), and mercury from coal-fired power generation units in December 2015.

The notification initially gave a two-year window for all power generation units to retrofit and install SO2 control technologies, but the deadline for retrofits has been extended multiple times due to non-compliance.

3 categories

In April 2021, the Ministry of Environment also categorised power plants under three different categories, giving them respective timelines to retrofit for SO2 control for the installation of pollution-control technologies by December 202, which later in September 2022 were extended to December 2026.

Experts say FGD systems play a pivotal role in mitigating the environmental impact of these emissions by effectively capturing and removing sulfur dioxide from the flue gasses before they are released into the atmosphere. However, ensuring the implementation of the rules by MoEF&CC is the responsibility of the state pollution control board.

Wake up KSPCB

"The Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) is the agency responsible for implementing the rules mentioned in the notification. However, it is an open secret that KSPCB has failed to deliver its duties time and again. The board should have swung into action when the first notification was issued by MoEF&CC in 2015, directing all power generation units to retrofit and install SO2 control technologies. Interim checks should have been conducted to ensure that coal-based power-generating units are in the process of installing these technologies. It is time that strict action is taken against the board for dereliction of its duties," said V Ramprasad, a city-based waste management and lake activist.

> **"Interim checks should have been conducted to ensure that coal-based power-generating units are in the process of installing these technologies**
>
> –V Ramprasad, waste management and lake activist

COP28 confirms: Coal is out of vogue and out of time

At the COP28 climate summit in Dubai this week, nations agreed to "transition away" from coal, oil and gas . After 30 years of COP meetings, the world has finally committed to weaning itself from these carbon-based drivers of climate change.

This COP statement is the first to name and shame all carbon-based fuels driving the climate crisis – not just coal, which has been mentioned in previous COP agreements, but also oil and gas.

The deal is a collective global aspiration rather than a legally binding agreement. Even so, it should put an end to the idea that burning carbon can continue on a significant scale beyond 2050.

The myth of carbon capture and storage

The final text also called for the acceleration of "zero and low emission technologies". Controversially, this includes removal technologies such as carbon capture and storage, which involves trapping, transporting and storing greenhouse gas emissions from facilities such as coal-fired power stations and gas plants.

The inclusion of this technology was criticised by many observers as a loophole which would allow polluting, inefficient industries to continue. But it is better understood as a symbolic sop to the coal, oil and gas industries, which have long pinned their hopes of staying in business on the idea of burying the carbon they emit. In reality, carbon capture and storage is a proven failure. The Gorgon gas project on the Barrow Island nature reserve, off Western Australia's Pilbara coast, has stored barely a third of the targeted amount of carbon, forcing the proponents to buy carbon offsets instead (themselves a dubious option).

Similarly, the only operating project capturing emissions from a coal-fired power plant, at Boundary Dam in Canada, has under-performed on carbon capture capacity by a huge margin.

So while carbon-capture is theoretically available as an option for new projects, in most cases it will prove either technically impossible or economically infeasible.

(By John Quiggin, The University of Queensland, The Conversation)

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BENGALURU SPEAKS

and gets heard on this page

STORYBEHINDTHEPHOTO

SWIFT MOVES

A folk dancer performing Puja Kunitha during the inauguration of Namma Jatre 2023

The picture was clicked by BM reader **Sridhar Comaravalli**

If you have a picture and a story to share, send us the picture with your name and number at **mybangaloremirror@timesgroup.com**

DID YOU KNOW?

Elvera Britto was a very popular Indian hockey player who was born in Cooke Town, Bengaluru, in 1940. She served as the captain of the Indian women's hockey team and the Mysore state's team. She was a recipient of the Arjun Award. Later, she also became the president of the Karnataka State Women's Hockey Association. She went to St Francis Xavier Girls High School in the city. She had started playing hockey when she was just 13 years old.

GET HEARD WITH MIRROR

9591233247

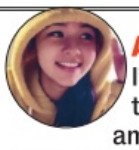
Let's see how much you know about Namma Bengaluru, folks. Tell us something incredible and mind-boggling about this beautiful city and our editors and researchers will check it out. If it's credible, we'll give it a shout-out, with your name and picture.

TAPTHECHATTER

where Bengalureans speak their mind

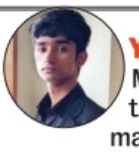
What is your favorite traditional dish from Bengaluru?

Nirmal, BM Reader
It is, I think, ghee podi idlis from local eateries. It's just awesome how they make it in Bengaluru. I never had anything like this before at other places. Bengaluru is known for food but anybody coming here should try this dish.



Ananya, BM Reader
I've never really had any traditional or much local food here, but I am slowly trying to explore the food being served in the city. It looks delicious and colourful. I love how this city has every kind of food to offer its visitors.

Surbhi, BM Reader
It has to be dosa and idli, along with a spicy rice dish. The dosa served here is different and crispy. The spices add a flavorful taste, and idlis are just healthy and can be easily eaten at any time of the day.



Yash Shinde, BM Reader
Masala Dosa is my favourite, as that is what I eat the most. No matter where I go in the city, my first preference is masala dosa. I love how they make it here. It's just lovely.

Cheewang, BM Reader
I absolutely love a piping hot plate of Meghna Biryani. It's a must-try in Bengaluru. There's nothing like it. It's served hot and has all the right spices. I am addicted to it. There are other places too but this is the best.

Sohini Bannerjee, BM Reader
I don't really eat much food from outside, but ghee podi dosa from Rameshwaram cafe is something I often eat. I can go there for breakfast with my friends, and the vibe is just amazing here in Bengaluru.

SPEAK TO US

How has Bengaluru's rapid development and urbanisation impacted your neighbourhood?
If you want to be featured in this section, mail us your answer to this question, in 25 words, with 'Tap The Chatter' in the subject line. Mail us with your name, occupation & a picture at mybangaloremirror@timesgroup.com or WhatsApp us on 9591233247

Traffic in the hands of science

IISc and Bengaluru Traffic Police to join forces to use AI-driven data solutions, aiming to alleviate congestion and improve safety

Sridhar Vivan
sridhar.vivan
@timesgroup.com
TWEETS @sridharvMirror

The MoU highlights the provision of support from IISc experts for safety audits, training, and capacity building for BTP

The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) is set to analyse the traffic data of the city. In this regard, IISc has entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP). The MoU outlines the sharing of the city's traffic data with IISc, enabling researchers to collaborate with BTP to reduce congestion and enhance traffic safety in the city through data-centric and domain-knowledgeable AI solutions. Additionally, the MoU highlights the provision of support from IISc experts for safety audits, training, and capacity building for BTP.

> **"The motivation behind the MoU with IISc is to enable the development of insights from this largely unused police data**
> – MN Anucheth, Joint Commissioner of Police

Joint Commissioner of Police MN Anucheth said, "The city produces more than 30 petabytes of data each month. The motivation behind the MoU with IISc is to enable the development of insights from this largely unused police data to alleviate the city's mobility and traffic safety challenges."

He added, "We also look forward to training and capacity building from IISc, which can provide our staff with the right knowledge base to improve mobility and traffic safety."

Prof Abdul Rawoof Pinjari, Chair of the Centre for Infrastructure, Sustainable Transportation, and Urban Planning (CiSTUP) at IISc, expressed his delight with the MoU.

He stated, "It is heartening that Bengaluru Traffic Police are investing substantial efforts in the measurement and monitoring of mobility and traffic safety in the city. Data from these efforts will help us better contribute to improving city mobility and traffic safety through relevant research projects and tailored training programmes."

HEALTH TIP: Hypothyroidism, low thyroid hormone levels, can cause brittle nails and other symptoms like forgetfulness and depression

Quit smoking for a year and your risk of having a heart attack is cut in half

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Plateful of warmth

What works best when there's a nip in the air? Dishes that can warm your heart and soul

CRISPY CHICKEN STRIPS

Prep Time: 20 mins
Cooking Time: 10 minutes
Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

- 2 Chicken Breasts (cut into finger size strips)
- 100 Grams Flour
- 2 Whole Eggs
- 200 Grams Panko Bread Crumbs
- 200 ML Vegetable Oil
- 2 Limes (Juice of half a lime and wedges separate)
- Salt and pepper to taste

METHOD

- In a bowl place chicken strips, add lime juice and salt and pepper to taste, mix well and set aside. Crack eggs in to a bowl, in another container add flour and season flour with salt and pepper. Place panko bread crumbs in a container. Take chicken place in flour, eggs and bread crumbs, coat thoroughly, repeat this process. In a deep kadai or frying pan add oil, heat and gradually add chicken strips. Fry till golden brown. Remove strain on kitchen towel, serve with lime wedges and sauce or dip of your choice.

PESTO FISH TIKKA

Prep Time: 20 mins
Cooking Time: 1 hour
Serves 2

INGREDIENTS

- 500 Grams Seer Fish (or any firm fish) skinned, filleted and cut into 2 inch cubes
- 1 Teaspoon Ginger Garlic Paste
- 3-4 Green Chillies
- 200 Grams Fresh Basil Leaves (Just the leaves)
- 50 Grams Grated Parmesan Cheese
- 20 Grams Pine Nuts
- 30 ML Olive Oil
- 100 Grams Yogurt
- Salt to Taste
- Juice of 1 Lime
- 3 Tablespoons Vegetable Oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

METHOD

- Place fish in a mixing bowl, add ginger, garlic paste, mix well, cover and place in fridge to marinate. In a mixing jar place basil leaves, green chillies, pine nuts, olive oil, salt, parmesan, salt and pepper and blend. Remove and place in a bowl. Take fish out from the fridge, add yogurt and a tablespoon of pesto sauce (add more pesto sauce if a stronger pesto flavor is desired). Correct seasoning add a dash of lime juice.
- In a heavy bottom frying pan, add oil and heat. Once oil is heated place fish gently in the oil and fry. Cook fish for no more than 5 minutes constantly turning the fish to get an even colour, to prevent from burning and to cook fish thoroughly. Finish with a sprinkling of lime juice and serve with a tomato and onion salad.

AGLIO OLIO PEPERONCINO

Prep Time: 15 mins
Cooking Time: 10 mins
Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

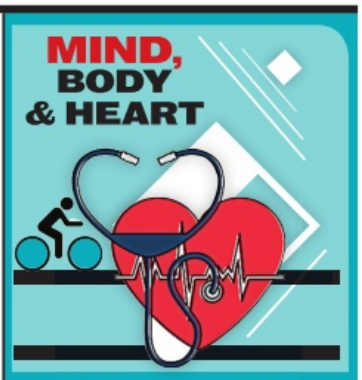
- 200 Grams Spaghetti Pasta
- 50 Grams Green Zucchini (Cut into 1 inch cubes)
- 50 Grams Yellow Zucchini (Cut into 1 inch cubes)
- 50 Grams Broccoli
- 25 Grams Red Peppers (Cut into 1 inch cubes)
- 25 Grams Yellow Peppers (Cut into 1 inch cubes)
- Approximately 2 Fresh Red Chillies Deseeded (or leave seeds in depending on how spicy you want it to be)
- 10 Grams Fresh Parsley Chopped
- 4-5 Cloves of Garlic Finely Chopped
- 30 ML Olive Oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/4th Cup Grated Parmesan Cheese

METHOD

- In a heavy bottom saucepan, fill with water half way to the top, add salt and bring to the boil, place pasta in boiling water and cook for 10 minutes. While pasta is cooking in another heavy bottom frying pan or skillet add olive oil, heat and add chopped garlic, saute the garlic, add vegetables and red chillies, add a little pasta water to cook and soften up the vegetables a little or till al dente. By now the pasta should be ready, strain and add spaghetti pasta to vegetables, add salt and pepper to taste, finish with chopped parsley and a generous sprinkling of grated parmesan. Serve with toasted garlic bread

Note* The vegetables can be replaced with 200 grams of chicken leg boneless (cubed) or 200 grams shelled prawns

Head Chef - Norman D'Silva , K-OS The Game Bar



All you need to know about...

Early meals

Good for heart
Researchers have discovered that eating meals early could reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases.

Food intake and cardio link
In a study published in the journal Nature Communications, the researchers used data from 103,389 participants in the NutriNet-Sante cohort (79 per cent of whom were women, with an average age of 42) to study the associations between food intake patterns and cardiovascular disease. To reduce the risk of possible bias, the researchers accounted for a large number of confounding factors, especially sociodemographic factors (age, sex, family situation, etc.), diet nutritional quality, lifestyle and sleep cycle.

Earlier the better
The findings showed that having a first meal later in the day (such as when skipping breakfast), is associated with a higher risk of cardiovascular disease, with a 6 per cent increase in risk per hour delay.
"For example, a person who eats for the first time at 9 am is 6 per cent more likely to develop cardiovascular disease than someone who eats at 8 am. When it comes to the last meal of the day, eating late (after 9 pm) is associated with a 28 per cent increase in the risk of cerebrovascular disease such as stroke compared with eating before 8 pm, particularly in women," the study said.

Longer duration of night-time fasting helps
Moreover, the researchers found that a longer duration of night-time fasting -- the time between the last meal of the day and the first meal of the following day -- is associated with a reduced risk of cerebrovascular disease, supporting the idea of eating one's first and last meals earlier in the day.

-IANS

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Police nor criminal court can seize passport, says K'taka HC

The High Court of Karnataka has reiterated that "neither the police nor the criminal court invoking powers under Sections 102 or 104 of the Criminal Procedure Code can seize or impound a passport."

The court, therefore, recently quashed the order of the Debt Recovery Tribunal-1, Bengaluru, which had impounded the passport of Nitin Shambhukumar Kasliwal, a businessman from Mumbai.

The court said the Tribunal has the powers of a civil court and when the civil court itself cannot impound a passport, the DRT too cannot.

The facts of the case date back to 1999 when Kasliwal had executed an agreement in favour of various lenders for loans secured. In 2015, the lender banks initiated a case before the Debt Recovery Tribunal seeking repayment and in default attachment and sale of properties of Kasliwal and his businesses.

The banks filed an application for the surrender of Kasliwal's passport. On April 16, 2015 the Tribunal passed an order retaining his passport.

Subsequently, Kasliwal filed applications whenever he needed to travel abroad and in return surrendered the passport to the Tribunal.

In December 2016 he sought the release of his passport as he had to renew it before its validity expired, but his application was rejected. He then approached the High Court.

Kasliwal's petition was heard by Justice M Nagaprasanna, who gave his judgement on December 6, 2023.

The court noted that the Tribunal had the same powers vested in a civil court.

"The issue is, whether the Tribunal can direct withholding of passport of any person in terms of the power ascribed under the provisions quoted hereinabove. The answer would be an unequivocal and emphatic 'NO'," the court said in its judgement.

Reasoning that the Tribunal does not have the power to impound passports, the court said, "The Passport Act is a special enactment and is trite that it being a special enactment which would prevail over any power of even the civil court or criminal court to retain or impound a passport.

"The issue in the case at hand is, such an act being done by the Tribunal which undoubtedly has only the power of following the procedure of a civil court in securing ends of justice. The civil court or the criminal court itself does not have the power to impound the passport."

The court said that though Sections 102 and 104 empower the police to seize and the court to impound any document, it does not include the passport.

"Impounding of any document produced before the court cannot stretch to an extent that those courts can impound the passport also," it said.

Ordering the Tribunal to release the passport of Kasliwal, the court said, "The very act of the Tribunal in directing surrender of the passport of a citizen or its detention before it, would amount to impounding of the passport. Such power is unavailable to the Tribunal." **PTI**

Air pollution: Huge gap between Centre's allocation and utilisation

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

They noted that the allocation amount for Bengaluru has been dropping year on year since the action plan to spend money is not up to the mark.

"There appears to be a lack of understanding of requirements under NCAP alongside a scientifically sketched implementation plan for the city. While the urban local body is supposed to implement it, guidance should be provided by domain experts. There seems to be a lack of coordination among agencies.

The Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) should be the guiding force and must come up with recommendations for implementation," said a city-based air pollution expert.

While KSPCB is expected to monitor the programme and provide support, the board appears to have washed its hands of the responsibility.

"The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) is the implementing agency and the sole stakeholder. KSPCB has no role to play.

The NCAP fund is directly disbursed to the Urban Development Department and then it is released to BBMP," said a KSPCB official.

'Satisfactory' AQI misleading?

Air quality experts and researchers are of the view that the current 'satisfactory' Air Quality Index (AQI) of Bengaluru (AQI below 100), as recorded by 11 Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Stations (CAAQMs) in the city, does not paint the real picture. They stressed that the city enjoys much better AQI than other Indian megacities, despite high source emissions due to its geographical location. Bengaluru's altitude of 920 m above mean sea level creates faster surface winds that disperse pollutants faster. However, this advantage also has a threshold, and once it exceeds the tipping point, AQI will deteriorate exponentially.

"A relatively better AQI of the city might be why NCAP is not being implemented and authorities are not taking the issue seriously. However, the advantage of geographical location will soon reach its threshold and that will be a point of no return. Post that, AQI will deteriorate exponentially. A good case in point is Mumbai. Our study has found that the emission level in Bengaluru is much higher than in Mumbai. Although monitoring stations show moderate AQI, the concentration of pollutants is much higher in hotspots before they drift owing to the city's geographical advantage. Those living in and around these hotspots are highly vulnerable. As far as health impact is concerned, it is as bad as in Mumbai or Delhi," said professor Gufran Beig, chair at NIAS.

The immediate priority for Bengaluru is high-resolution gridded emission inventory of air pollutants, identification of hotspots, establishment of a forecasting system, and analysis of the toxicity of pollutants and their health impact, according to the experts .

"The emission inventory of 200m*200m must be created instead of gross estimation. This is the time for Bengaluru to act. If not, the city will soon overstep its tipping point," added professor Beig.

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Aquaman future not looking good

Hollywood star Jason Momoa appears uncertain about the 'Aquaman' character and franchise's future.

In an ET Online interview, the recent Saturday Night Live host shared his doubts about continuing to play the submerged superhero he first inhabited in 2017's Justice League and then in the $1.15 billion-grossing stand-alone film the following year.

"The truth of it is — I mean, if the audience loves it, then there's a possibility. But right now, I'm like, 'It's not looking too good'," Momoa said.

Noting that DC heads James Gunn and Peter Safran want to "start their own thing up," he said in the interview that he doesn't "necessarily want it to be the end ... (but) I don't think it's really, like, a choice."

That is despite Warner Bros' Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom is all set to release. It arrives nearly five years to the day after Aquaman debuted en route to becoming the top-grossing DC film of all time.

Momoa added about potentially playing the metahuman aka Arthur Curry in future pics: "If there's a place in their world for me, I would love to be a part of it. This is my home. Warner and DC is definitely my home. So, that's all I'll say."

How does playing Aquaman make Momoa feel? "If I just put it in the simplest (terms), it makes my heart smile." **–IANS**

Documentary 'absolutely on'

Rapper and singer-songwriter Nicki Minaj talked about the anticipated documentary on her life and career on the latest episode of 'Watch What Happens Live with Andy Cohen', reported People.

Not only did the rap artist reveal that the project, which was first announced in 2020, is finished and set to be released soon, but she also stated that it will be well worth the wait. "The documentary is absolutely still coming," the 'Red Ruby da Sleeze' artist confirmed.

"I'll add some new stuff going on in it to reflect the aftermath of Pink Friday 2 and stuff like that, but it's done," she said, revealing she expects to release the project before starting off on her Pink Friday 2 World Tour. **–ANI**

Birthday party with special someone

Actor Nupur Sanon, who turned a year older on Friday, shared 'birthday dump' from the celebration with her rumoured boyfriend Stebin Ben.

Taking to Instagram, Nupur treated fans with a glimpse of her birthday celebration.

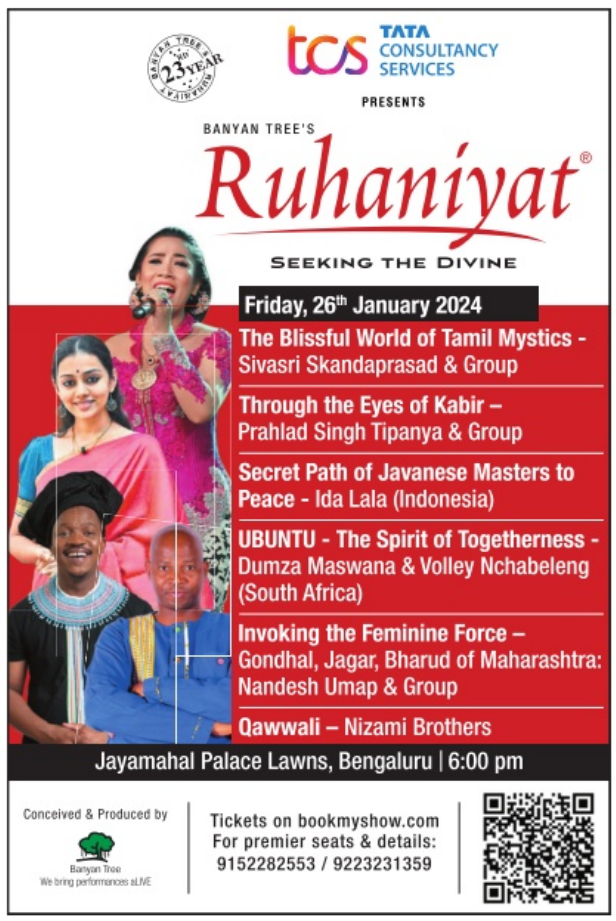
Nupur looked beautiful in a mini golden-copper shade dress that she opted for her birthday look.

In one of the pictures, Nupur and Stebin could be seen posing in a car with balloons around them.

Sharing the pictures and videos, she penned a message for the love received on her special day.

The note read, "Birthday Dump part 1 [?]So thankful for all my people, my family and friends who've become family- And so thankful for my cute Insta fam, for everyone who has wished me , for all the videos and prayers.And lastly, sorry for the calls I've missed and the messages I'm still replying toAll in all, I had a good one! "

As soon as the pictures were uploaded, fans and followers chimed in the comment section. **–ANI**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SANJAYNAGAR VAIBHAV | MADIWALA SANDHYA | HONGASANDRA BRUNDA | KONANKUNTE MANASA | RAMMURTHYNAGAR LAKSHMI | KAMALANAGAR VEERABHADRESHWARA | KATTRIGUPPE KAMAKYA | GOWDANPALYA SRINIVASA | RAJGOPALNAGAR MARUTI | PEENYA BHARATHI | GOLLARAHATTI VENKATESHWARA | AGARA TIRUMALA | KADUGUDI SRINIVASA | K.R.PURAM VENKATESHWARA | BOMMANAHALLI KRISHNA | R.T.NAGAR RADHAKRISHNA | B.N.PURA PUSHPANJALI | GARUDACHARPALYA V CINEMAS | CHIKKALASANDRA BALAJI | UTHARAHALLI VAISHNAVI | SINGAPURA VAINIDHI | KODIGEHALLI RAJMURALI | KENGERI VENKATESHWARA | KENGERI ROBIN | GOTTIGERE LAKSHMI | MALLATHAHALLI V R CINEMAS | EJIPURA RAVI | VIDYAPEETA CIRCLE CHANDRODAYA | SRI RAMPURA ARUNA | DOMMASANDRA BALAJI | YELAHANKA GANESH | AND ALSO AT THER CINEMAS ALL OVER THE STATE

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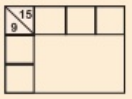
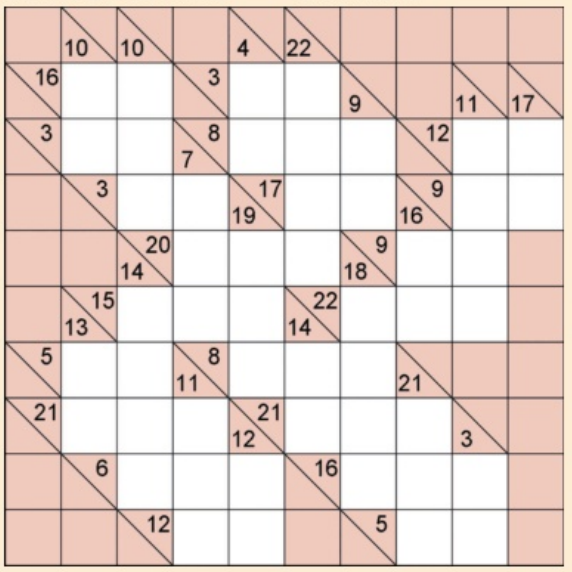
Kakuro

The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas

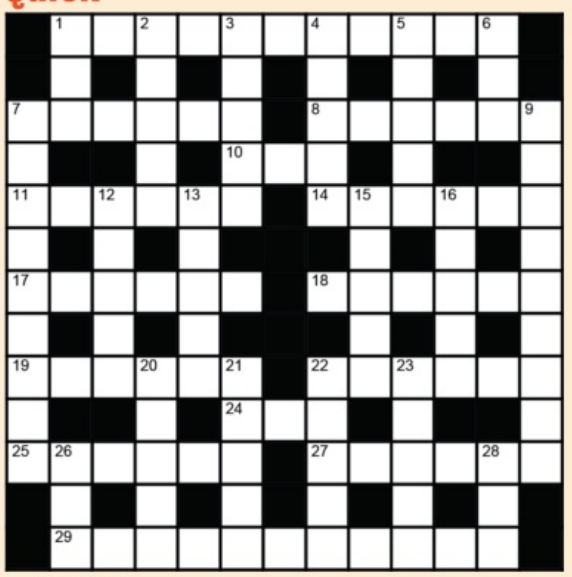


for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.

Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

1 Realtor (6,5)
7 Tailbone (6)
8 Not at all lenient? (6)
10 Eden denizen (3)
11 Caught or ensnared (6)
14 Hit or impressed (6)
17 Entirely (2,4)
18 The heavenly twins (6)
19 Ravenous (6)
22 Pursues or follows (6)
24 Harem room (3)
25 Environment or surroundings (6)
27 A threatening influence (6)
29 Piously; in a god-fearing manner? (11)

DOWN

1 Green prefix? (3)
2 Understood (5)
3 Used to the limit (5)
4 Church sections (5)
5 Mistake (5)
6 Facial spasm (3)
7 Road that is also known as Sampangi Ramaswamy Temple Road (9)
9 Disagree (4,5)
12 Person of great intelligence, strength or standing (5)
13 Organic compound (5)
15 Pearly whites (5)
16 Divisions (5)
20 Subject to heated questioning? (5)
21 Not old (5)
22 Small film role (5)
23 Mom's sisters (5)
26 Comparative ending ? (3)
28 Affectedly devious (3)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: E EQUALS H

GECD EUBC U KYFEG GW NCOILKC GEUG EUBC U ECUKG GW ECZM.

Linemaro

When someone tries to hand me a flier, it's like they're saying 'Here, you throw this away'

Mindchow

When we stop yielding to a chain reaction of revenge or self-hatred, we gradually learn to catch the emotional reaction and drop the story lines

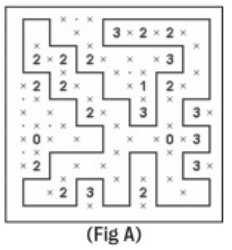
Joke of the day

When someone tries to hand me a flier, it's like they're saying 'Here, you throw this away'

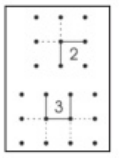
Loop

Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.



(Fig A)

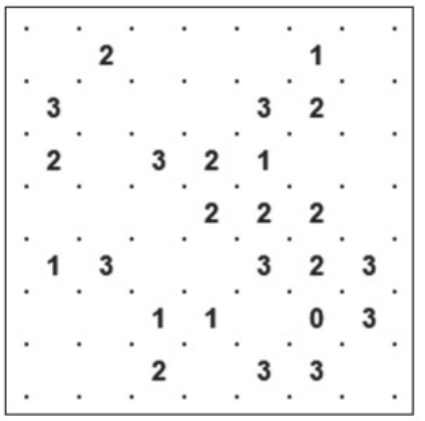


(Fig B) Not Allowed

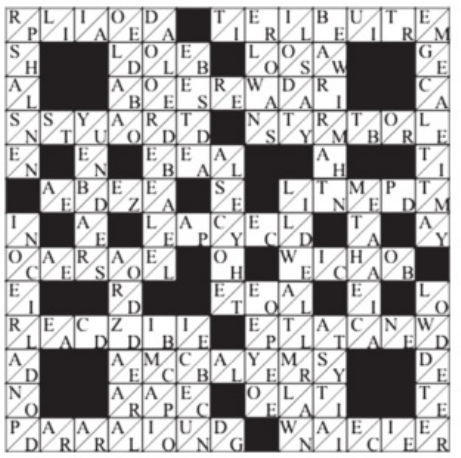
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



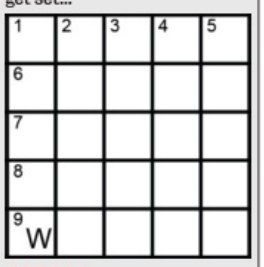
Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...



ACROSS

1 Pro us; 6 An ape;
7 Opens; 8 A sari;
9 Ally W

DOWN

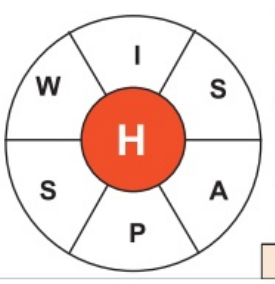
1 Aw pap; 2 Or ape;
3 Lou in; 4 Learn;
5 Says S

Mensapuzzle

What number should replace the question mark?

100, 97.25, 91.75, 83.5, ?

Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

07 Average; **08** Good; **10** Outstanding

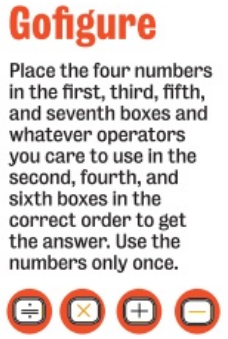
SudokuChallenge

8	7	4					9	
1					8			
		5	9			6		
2				6			8	
7			1		3			2
	9			8				6
		8			6	5		
			2					1
	1					9	7	4

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.



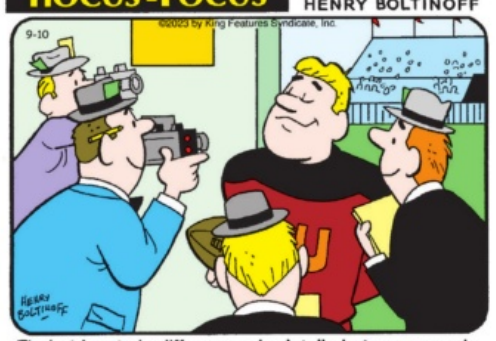
Easy = 1
6 8 8 9

Medium = 20
2 2 5 8

Hard = 6
1 4 8 3

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. .Hat is different. 2. Camera is missing. 3. Pennant is moved. 4. Tie is missing. 5. Thumb is moved. 6. Football is missing.

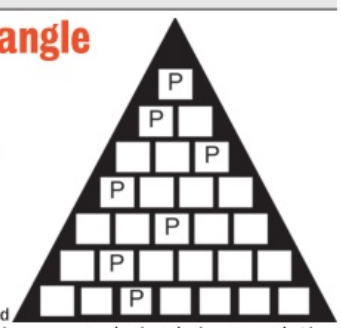
Riddler

Complete the words below using three consecutive letters in alphabetical order, e.g. _ _ A _ U S; add A B and C it would become ABACUS.

1. C _ E _ _ S, 2. _ U _ D L _, 3. _ U A _ T _.

Alpha triangle

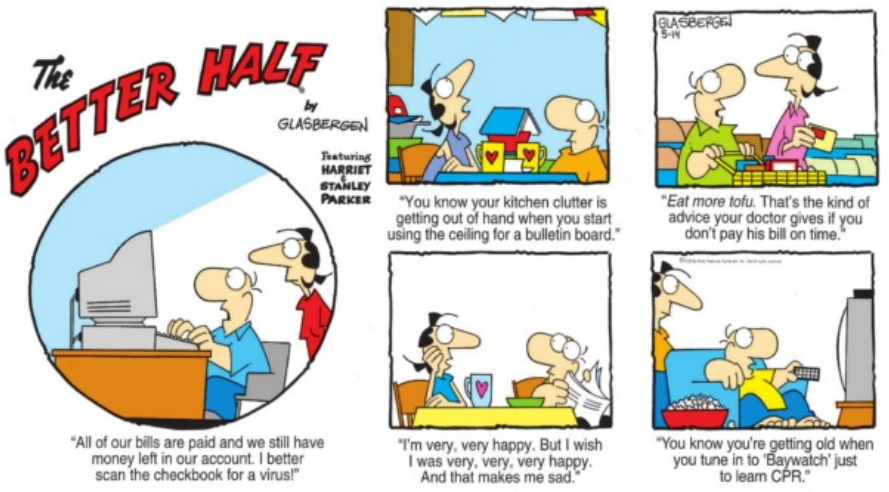
1 Parking sign
2 Dad
3 Head covering
4 Step
5 Coastal features
6 Peaks, acmes
7 Turn turtle

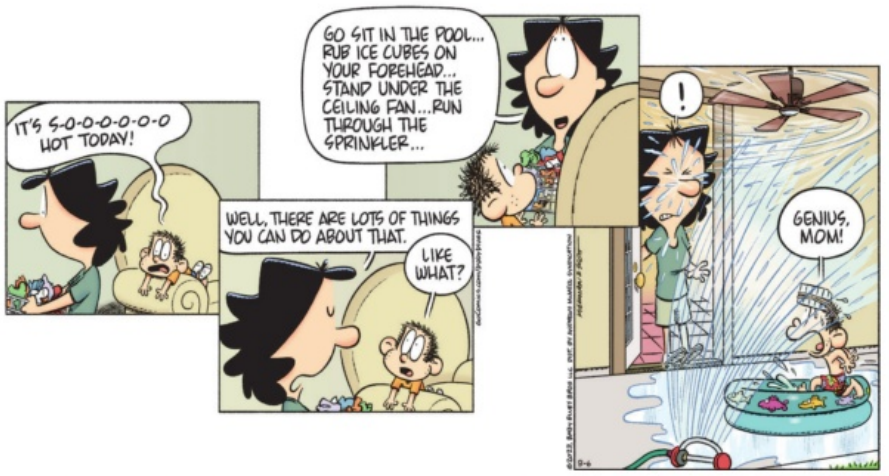


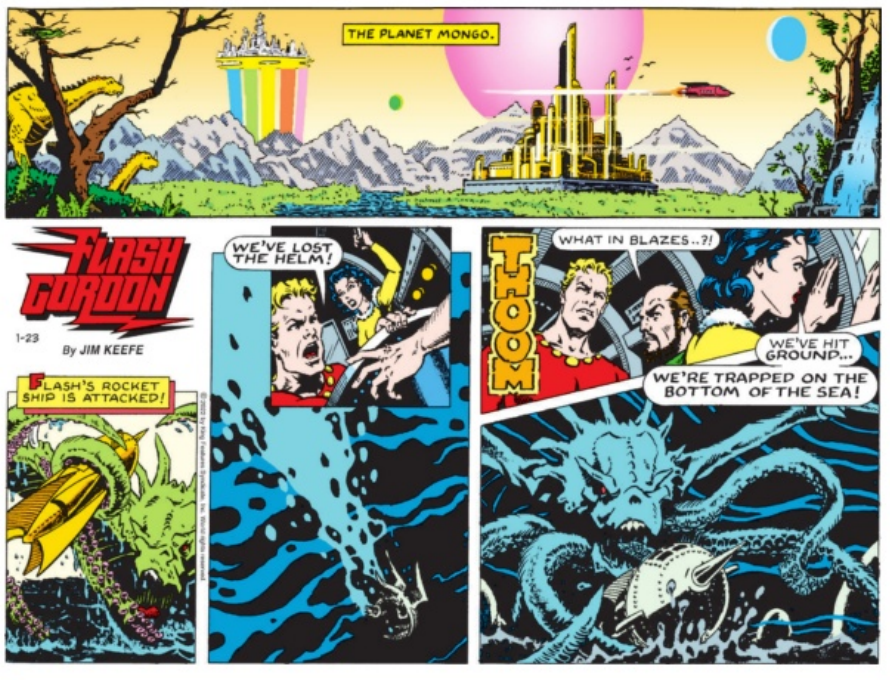
Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE

COMICS


The BETTER HALF
by GLASBERGEN
Featuring HARRIET & STANLEY PARKER
"All of our bills are paid and we still have money left in our account. I better scan the checkbook for a virus!"
"You know your kitchen clutter is getting out of hand when you start using the ceiling for a bulletin board."
"I'm very, very happy. But I wish I was very, very, very happy. And that makes me sad."
GLASBERGEN
"Eat more tofu. That's the kind of advice your doctor gives if you don't pay his bill on time."
"You know you're getting old when you tune in to 'Baywatch' just to learn CPR."


IT'S S-O-O-O-O-O-O HOT TODAY!
GO SIT IN THE POOL... RUB ICE CUBES ON YOUR FOREHEAD... STAND UNDER THE CEILING FAN...RUN THROUGH THE SPRINKLER...
WELL, THERE ARE LOTS OF THINGS YOU CAN DO ABOUT THAT.
LIKE WHAT?
!
GENIUS, MOM!



WHAT YOUR STARS SAY TODAY

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20
Today, the Moon has a negative influence, and you may sense negative vibrations around you, causing upset. It is advisable to refrain from investing in worthless assets. Avoid having expectations from people at work, at home, and in society to prevent further distress. Trust your intuition before making important decisions today.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20
Today, you are blessed by elders. You may successfully implement business plans with the help of your subordinates. Participation in social or family gatherings may enhance your network. Short business-related travels are likely, to bring benefits shortly. Sibling disputes may be resolved.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21
Today is good; your financial health is expected to be robust. Benefits from past investments are likely. You can just control your spending on unnecessary items to boost savings. Lovebirds are advised to communicate politely with their partners to avoid conflicts.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23
Today, you are blessed by the Moon, making it a good day for you. Your vitality and energy are high, and you may enjoy your work. Planning for new projects and designing flow charts may be on the agenda. Job seekers may find promising opportunities. Lovebirds should steer clear of discussions on trivial topics.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23
Today, you may feel disappointed. Control your arrogance to prevent losses due to inappropriate remarks. Lovebirds should be cautious in their discussions to avoid relationship issues.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23
Today, you are blessed by the Moon, and new sources of income may open up. Past investments will start yielding profits, converting losses into gains and improving your financial health. Health issues related to parents may be resolved.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22
Today, you may be very happy and busy at work. Senior colleagues may appreciate your efforts, leading to changes in your position or responsibilities through promotions. Hidden enemies and opponents may be under control. Singles and lovebirds may make important marriage decisions with the support of relatives or friends.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22
Today, you are blessed by the Moon, and previous messy situations are under control. You can initiate postponed tasks and reap the rewards of your hard work. Business gains may boost your savings. Consider spending on art or literature and plan for an overseas trip.

Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22
Today, you may feel dull and face health issues affecting your professional and domestic life. Upset over your spouse's health may be a concern. Avoid making investments in new business projects to prevent losses. Students should focus on their studies and avoid distractions.

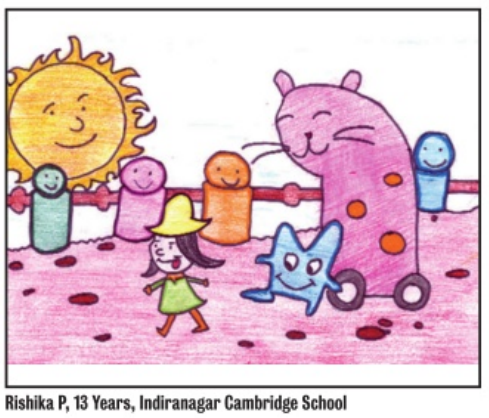
Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20
Today, you may be busy at work and explore additional sources of income, boosting your bank balance. Showing interest in art, movies, and glamour may enhance your creativity. Lovebirds may progress their relationship to marriage, and students can pursue their career goals.

Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19
Today, you are blessed by a positive moon, feeling healthy, and resolving old health issues. Recovering stock funds and applying for a loan for luxury items may be possible. Control over opponents is likely.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20
Today, you may feel dull, leading to laziness and carelessness, affecting your focus at work. Avoid investing in assets and be cautious about family matters. Students should study thoroughly for exam success.

KIDZONE

T Ravi Shankar, 11 Years, Modern Public English School



Rishika P, 13 Years, Indiranagar Cambridge School

Kidzone, Bangalore Mirror, No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru-560 011;
Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M
64√16)÷√[81/9]!
4!÷√[9]!
24÷3!
24÷6
4

BULL'S EYE
aplish, hasp, hiss, sash, ship, swish, wash, WASPISH, whip, wish

STRIKE OUT

P	L	I	E	D		T	R	I	B	U	T	E		
H		L	O	B	O	S	A					G		
A		B	O	E	R	W	A	R				A		
S	T	U	A	R	T		S	Y	M	B	O	L		
E		N		B	A	A		A				I		
A	D	Z	E		S		I	N	E	P	T			
I		E		L	A	C	E	D		T		Y		
C	A	R	O	L		O		E	C	H	O			
E		R		T	E	A		I				O		
L	A	D	D	I	E		P	L	A	C	E	D		
A		E	M	B	L	E	M	S				D		
P	E	O	N	S										
A	R	I	A	S										
W	A	L	L	Y										

FAST FIVE

P	O	U	R	S
A	P	N	E	A
A	R	I	A	S
P	E	O	N	S
A		E	M	S
		A		
		D		
		I		
		E		
		A		
		D		
		I		
		C		
		E		
		R		
		A		
		P		
		I		
		N		
		E		
		A		
		T		
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		O		
		U		
		S		
		E		
		S		
		T		
		R		
		U		
		C		
		K		

RIDDLER
1. Crests,
2. Cuddle,
3. Quarts.

QUICK

R	E	S	T	A	U	R	A	N	T					
E		L		N		E		T		O				
M		I	L	I	E	U		M	E	N	A	C	E	
A		R		O		D	A			U				
H	U	N	G	R	Y		C	H	A	S	E	S		
G		A		E			T			T		S		
I	N	T	O	T	O		G	E	M	I	N	I		
N		I		S			E		N			E		
N	E	T	T	E	D		S	T	R	U	C	K		
U		I		E	V	E		O				A		
S	T	R	I	C	T		C	O	C	O	Y	X		
C		A		A		P		R		A		I		
E	S	T	A	T	E	A	G	E	N	T				

QUOTE UNCODE
They have a right to censure that have a heart to help.

MENSA PUZZLE
72.5: the amount deducted increases by 2.75 each time i.e. 2.75, 5.5, 8.25, 11

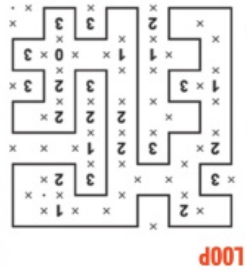
SUDOKU

8	7	4	6	2	1	3	9	5
1	6	9	3	5	8	2	4	7
3	2	5	9	7	4	6	1	8
2	5	3	4	6	7	1	8	9
9	4	8	7	1	6	5	2	3
5	3	7	2	4	9	8	6	1
4	9	1	5	8	2	7	3	6
7	8	6	1	9	3	4	5	2
6	1	2	8	3	5	9	7	4

GO FIGURE
Easy
8 – 9 – 6 + 8 = 1
Medium
5 × 2 + 8 + 2 = 20
Hard
8 – 4 + 3 – 1 = 6

ALPHA TRIANGLE
p, Pa, Gap,
Pace, Gapes,
Apices,
Capsize.

LOOP



KAKURO

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Strike a pose
SRK beams with pride as his son AbRam imitates his signature pose at annual function

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Matthew Perry died from effects of drug ketamine, coroner says

Matthew Perry died from the acute effects of the anesthetic ketamine, according to the results of an autopsy on the 54-year-old "Friends" actor released Friday.

The Los Angeles County Department of Medical Examiner said in the autopsy report that Perry also drowned in "the heated end of his pool," but that it was a secondary factor in his Oct. 28 death, deemed an accident.

People close to Perry told investigators that he was undergoing ketamine infusion therapy, an experimental treatment used to treat depression and anxiety. But the coroner said the levels of ketamine in Perry's body were in the range used for general anesthesia during surgery, and that his last treatment 1 1/2 weeks earlier wouldn't explain those levels. The drug is typically metabolized in a matter of hours. The report says coronary artery disease and buprenorphine, which is used to treat opioid use disorder, also contributed. The amount of ketamine detected "would be enough to make him lose consciousness and lose his posture and his ability to keep himself above the water," said Dr. Andrew Stolbach, a medical toxicologist with Johns Hopkins Medicine who reviewed the autopsy report at the request of The Associated Press.

"Using sedative drugs in a pool or hot tub, especially when you're alone, is extremely risky and, sadly, here it's fatal," said Stolbach, who noted that both ketamine and buprenorphine can be used safely.

Perry was declared dead after being found unresponsive at his home in the Pacific Palisades area of Los Angeles. Investigators performed the autopsy the following day. The actor had taken drugs in the past but had been "reportedly clean for 19 months," according to the report. Perry had played pickleball earlier in the day and his assistant, who lives with him, found him face down in the pool after returning from errands. **-AP**

Season of yellow

Bollywood actress Alia Bhatt, who was recently seen in the streaming film 'Heart of Stone', hopped on to the viral 'laddoo peela' trend as she donned a yellow-coloured ethnic wear.

She wore a stunning yellow-coloured net saree adorned with intricate embroidery and paired it with a chic sleeveless blouse. Alia's choice of jewellery was nothing short of exquisite, featuring an emerald choker necklace, matching studs and a ring.

The actress gave her fans fun-filled glimpses from the mehendi ceremony of her best friend's wedding celebrations. She shared a series of pictures of herself dressed in a gorgeous yellow saree with bird motifs on the border. She wrote in the caption, "Yellow there". The Internet can't stop gushing over her looks. The comments section was flooded with fans and industry friends complimenting her. Alia's mother Soni Razdan wrote, "What a beauty". Bhumi Pednekar wrote, "Stunning" with a heart emoji. Preity Zinta dropped a bunch of red heart emoticons. The actress also shared the pictures on Instagram and wrote, "Laddoo Peela szn". **-IANS**

MARUTI SUZUKI ARENA
BEAT THE PRICE HIKE.
LIMITED PERIOD FOR BEST OFFERS
ARENA YEAR END BONANZA
MARUTI SUZUKI ARENA
BIG SAVINGS
ALTO K10 ₹69 000*
S-PRESSO ₹69 000*
SWIFT ₹49000*
WAGONR ₹59 000*
CELERIO ₹69 000*
ALTO K10 S-PRESSO SWIFT WAGONR CELERIO
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Black glass on the vehicle is due to lighting effect.
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